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⁎ *An Index with Title page to Volume XII of* India *(July to December,* 1899) *is now ready. A Copy will be forwarded gratis and post free to any Subscriber on application to the Manager.*

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE address on "Our Work in India in the Nineteenth Century" which Sir William Lee-Warner delivered yesterday before the Indian Section of the Society of Arts, while it contained much that was interesting and suggestive, was not without some of the exaggerations which we are accustomed to from official lips. It is easy to show that India was a very disagreeable place in the times following the break-up of the Mogul Empire, when the French, the English, the Mahrattas and others were all fighting for the inheritance, and that it is more peaceful now that one of the competitors has beaten all the others. But where is the proof that the eighteenth century was typical of Indian history? It is, however, satisfactory to find that Sir William Lee-Warner does not fear any immediate disturbance of the *Pax Britannica* by an invasion from the North-West. Fortunately, he says, "nature has interposed almost insuperable obstacles in the way of its realisation. . . . ." Like most official apologists, Sir William complains much of the ungrateful criticism of the Indian Press; but it is curious that he selects for answer some extravagant accusations against the British put forward at the time of the Mutiny.

Sir W. Lee-Warner makes great capital out of the opposition of certain political reformers in India to social reform. It is an easy way of gaining the confidence of an English audience, who of course think their own social institutions the best possible. But is it so very irrational for Indians to have the same opinion about *their* social institutions? Those of Europe are obviously in a state of flux and transition. Is it an indefensible position for an Indian to prefer to retain those of his fathers, at least until he can be quite sure of the ultimate form which the Western family will take? And why should a nation maintaining an hereditary peerage be so shocked at caste, which only carries out the same idea completely and logically? Sir W. Lee-Warner also makes a point of the improvement in the administration of justice, and contrasts the corruption of former times with the purity of the present. All this is true; and yet two matters must be adverted to in order to complete the picture. First, the villager had little occasion to go to the Courts in the old time—the village elders did what was needed. Secondly, the policeman is the representative of the law with whom the Indian comes most in contact; and, unfortunately, police corruption does not belong wholly to the past.

Sir W. Lee-Warner is inclined to look on the improved communications between India and England as a great advantage to the former country. He recounts the bad effects of the old isolation:—

> An extravagance more Asiatic than English was cultivated by the British Nabob; men who had lost touch with home were prone to lapse into Indian ways.

But this extravagance had at least the effect of causing the Indians' money to be spent in India. Those who lapsed into Indian ways were more likely to know and sympathise with the feelings of the people. Those who had lost touch with home were less likely to swell the Tribute by remittances to Europe. But the Tribute is a subject Sir William Lee-Warner carefully, and no doubt naturally, avoids.

British Indian Commerce for January 15 opens with some magniloquent remarks on the glories and blessings of British rule in India. To be told that 300 years ago the people were "steeped in poverty," is scarcely to praise the present. Are they not "steeped in poverty" still? Then it is said: "They are settled on their own soil, and can till their fields without fear of disturbance or the ravages of invaders;" but the pressure of the tax-gatherer, and the money-lender, who is the child of the tax-gatherer, may in the end be as fatal to the possession of the soil as the more open harrying of the man-at-arms. We are asked to contemplate the state of savage warfare in which India was 300 years ago. Those who are willing to go back a very little earlier, to the first arrival of the Portuguese, will find that in Southern India at least the civilisation was essentially peaceful. Such wars as occurred were carried on with an elaborate ceremony and code of rules that would make Buller or Joubert stare. Wars more unlike those conjured up by the Anglo-Indian imagination it would be impossible to conceive.

The observations of the *Times of India* on the release of the Natus only serve to intensify the wrong that has been done. After two years of imprisonment and detention they have been allowed their liberty, but their characters are to remain for all time under the charge of sedition and disloyalty. Our contemporary does not hide its own view that "the Bombay Government must have had excellent reasons for invoking extreme and summary powers." But if, as is affirmed, the liberation of the Natus is due to the political peace now reigning in the Deccan, why cannot they be given an opportunity of clearing their characters? Why cannot they be told at least the reason for their long detention? There is, indeed, one very satisfactory feature in the situation. Owing to the good fight made by the Natus and their friends, it is unlikely that the Government will soon revert to *lettres-de-cachet*. Even the *Times of India* says:—

> We have ourselves been moved to deprecate, upon general grounds, resort to the swift and secret methods adopted in the case under discussion. Had any tendency been exhibited to bring these methods into general use, we should not have hesitated to join in denouncing their utilisation.

If the Natus are the last Indians imprisoned "by administrative process," as they say in Russia, it will be much to their honour, for the disuse of such methods will be greatly due to the courage and dignity with which they met their sufferings.

Two cases that have attracted some attention in India are again before the public. The *Bengalee* reports that Mr. James Peter, the tea-planter who was so indignant at an Indian daring to hold up an umbrella when he passed him on the road, and who sent his syce to break it, has been convicted. He was only fined 8 annas, but ordered to pay over 6 rupees costs. The *Rangoon Gazette* announces that the Viceroy has ordered a fresh enquiry into the case of Sergeant Howson of the Rangoon Police, who shot a Native dead. This new enquiry is attributed to the "lying accusations of the Indian Press," which is scarcely complimentary to Lord Curzon.

Three soldiers of the 16th Lancers out shooting saw a buck enter a patch of sugar cane, which they proceeded to beat. The animal came out and one of the party fired at it with buckshot. One shot "going wide" hit a boy; whereupon the villagers turned out and beat one of the soldiers while the other two made their escape. The *Pioneer*, from which we learn of this fracas, is very much enraged—at this reckless shooting of the boy?—not at all, but at the cruel and disrespectful treatment of the poor

Lancer. "It will soon be dangerous for a British soldier to show his face anywhere in the interior of an up-country district." The civil authorities are summoned to do their duty. "The soldier has the same right to go abroad unmolested as any other man," and apparently a much greater right to shoot boys. Indian villagers are well known to be timid and inclined to give soldiers a wide berth. But, as the *Tribune* says, "even a worm sometimes turns. Villagers such as thrashed the object of the *Pioneer's* commiseration would not be human beings but merely clods of earth if their gorge did not rise at the sight of a young boy of theirs being shot on the village fields." Why is it that in India buck-shooting so often ends in boy-shooting?

The *Mahratta* gives a very gloomy account of the spread of the famine in the Bombay Presidency. Most of the test works and some regular relief works are being carried on under the system of payment by results. This, it is said, the Famine Commission considered suitable to the earlier and less acute stages of distress. But our contemporary believes that the task-work system has worked very harshly. The tasks are often beyond the powers of the labourers, already weakened by privation; so that they can hardly earn sufficient wages to procure, at the high prices prevailing, "a starving meal." It suggests that the task should be made lighter. In the Kaira District the purchase of a set of boring apparatus has been sanctioned by the authorities to assist in the search for water. This is a new experiment and one that will be watched with great interest.

An extremely painful case was recently decided on appeal by the Bombay High Court. It was the appeal of Bhimi, wife of a very poor cultivator Supadu, against a decision of the Sessions Judge of Khandesh, who, in October last, convicted her of murder and attempt to commit suicide, and sentenced her to transportation for life for the one offence and to three months' simple imprisonment for the other, the sentences to run concurrently. On August 21 she appears to have thrown her two children, aged six and four, into a well and jumped in after them, but to have been rescued. The family was very poor, and their caste forbade them to beg. The report in the *Times of India* (December 30) runs:

> She had been starving for three days; she said that while on her way to her sister's village she felt giddy and lay down under a nimb tree; that her two sons rolled about fighting for the first possession of a little piece of bread which she had tied up in a rag; and that she was poor and starving, and was tired of life. The Sessions Judge had not a shadow of doubt upon the evidence that this poor woman was tired of life, and it was quite possible that she preferred to die with her sons rather than bear the pangs of hunger or leave the little ones behind her to eventually die for want of food. Her resolution was precipitated by the fact that there was no work to be got, nor grass in the jungle to cut and sell to provide food for her husband, who was also without food for a day or two.

The Sessions Judge proceeded according to law, but he expressed his intention to appeal to Government for mercy on the woman's behalf. Justices Parsons and Ranade, of course, dismissed the appeal, but intimated that the Sessions Judge should bring the incident to the notice of the Government. This, no doubt, he will do. Here is a very sad glimpse of the conditions under which too many—millions and millions—of the rayats live. It is a grim hint to "Imperialism."

The *Pioneer* is struck by the prosperity of the Dacca Division during the year 1898. It is even afraid that the inhabitants may wax fat and kick:—

> Were the Bengali other than he is, he might follow the ancient example, with unfortunate consequences to himself and his over-lords. As it is he exhausts his superfluous energies in fruitless discontent, and his superfluous cash in still more fruitless litigation. This being the case it is a pleasant surprise to discover that despite its prosperity there was a decrease alike in civil litigation and in criminal work in the Dacca Division in 1898.

So that it was not the case after all. Possibly the fruitless discontent is as much the creature of the editorial imagination as the "fruitless litigation." But what is the reason for the comparative prosperity of Dacca in spite of a short jute crop and some damage to rice? The Division is very thickly peopled, but it is certain that all Anglo-Indians will agree that that ought to produce poverty. Is it, then, because of the permanent settlement? It may be wondered how long the prosperity of Dacca would last if it were subject to the heavy and continually rising land-tax of the Central Provinces.

The Address of the District Council and Municipal Committee of Nagpur to Mr. Fraser, Acting-Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, is painful reading, in spite of the many evidences of good feeling which it shows; for it is in the main occupied with petitions for succour from the effects of plague and famine, Nagpur itself being threatened with the failure of its water-supply. Mr. Fraser's answer was very sympathetic, though as regards the remission of revenue and the refunding of plague expenditure, he had of course to await the decision of the Government of India. Apparently local self-government has been no failure at Nagpur, for he said:—

> We have to thank you for hearty co-operation with us and for much work well done. You have realised the true object of local self-government.

The *Friend of India* sums up the Resolution of the Bengal Government on the working of the District and Local Boards as more favourable to the former than the latter. "The District Boards, on the whole, fulfil the purpose for which they were established as well as could reasonably have been expected." As to the shortcomings of the Local Boards they are referred to "the insignificance of the allotments made to them and the lack of competent supervision." Mr. Williams, who was in charge of the Bhagulpur Division, attributes any failure in the Local Boards, to the "difficulty of getting sufficiently well-educated men in out-of-the-way places and the very limited powers the Local Boards are entrusted with." Thus it seems that the educated Indian, however much he is attacked, is nevertheless a necessity for the good government of India. The Lieutenant-Governor fully endorses the praise given to the District Boards.

The Indian Association has addressed a representation to the Government of Bengal on certain points in the new Council Rules of December 14, 1899, which appear to be retrograde. Under the old rules, the Mofussil Municipalities had "at least one Councillor" nominated upon their recommendation, and they were not placed in the category of those bodies that were to have "not more than one." In actual fact, they had two, just as the District Boards had two. Under the new rules, they are to have "at least one Councillor" as before, but they are also to have "not more than one," while the District Boards remain with two. The Committee of the Indian Association "hope that it is not intended to disfranchise the Mofussil Municipalities to any extent." But, so far as we can see, their hope is gone—that is, if the new rule stand unmodified. At the same time we quite agree with the Committee that "it would be difficult to conceive a more popular constituency or one which has more faithfully discharged the trust reposed in it," and that "any curtailment of the existing rights of the Mofussil Municipalities would be regarded as a public misfortune." The North-West Provinces and Madras will retain their two members, while Bengal will have only one; but we dare say they will be reduced next. The Municipalities are undergoing repression.

The disturbances in Tinnevelly will not be forgotten in the district during the next five years at least, for during that period it is to be saddled with a strong force of "punitive police." The inhabitants, peaceable and militant alike, will have to pay costs, which are to be raised by a levy on house property. The scale of charges for the first year is: for thatched huts, 12 annas; for terraced buildings, Re. 1..8; for storied houses, Rs. 3. This assessment is calculated to bring in a sum of Rs. 1,50,000, the larger half of which will be required in payment of the provision of hutting accommodation for the men. In subsequent years the only costs will be for maintenance of the men and upkeep of their huts, so that the assessment ought to be reduced by about half. Still, the imposition falls heavily upon the quiet people of the district, who may well blame the authorities for having ever allowed the bad blood of the antagonistic tribes to gather head, or to get beyond control. The *casus belli* was well known, and ought never to have got out of hand. But, as usual, the people have to suffer for the heedlessness of their rulers.

In the appeal on the Gorakhpur police torture case, Mr. Justice Knox, at the close of a careful judgment, found "Murhamad Magsud, Baswanad, and Abdul Sattar not

guilty of either of the offences with which they have been charged "—namely, fabricating false evidence, and torturing four or more persons with a view of extorting from them confessions which they must have known or suspected to be false. It is satisfactory to have the police exculpated from so serious a charge. It would seem to follow that steps should be taken to discourage the bringing of such a charge in other cases, unless on clear and strong evidence. There are other disturbing elements in the case, however. The laxity of the Sessions Judge is placed in a severe light by Mr. Justice Knox, who says:—

> The particular matter or matters touching which evidence is considered to have been fabricated should be distinctly set forth. The judgment affords no help, and it is evident from its tenour and language that the learned Sessions Judge has not appreciated the necessity of pointing out to the accused, or clearly defining to his own mind, what was the particular piece or what were the particular pieces of false evidence which the accused were considered to have fabricated.

Here is a "learned" Sessions Judge and no mistake—a very "Daniel come to judgment."

It is worth while to go a little deeper into this case. Mr. Justice Knox very naturally supposed "that, upon this matter coming to the notice of the police and the District Magistracy, the first step taken would have been a careful and detailed examination of the persons of these three men by the civil surgeon of Gorakhpur"—the men alleged to have been "tortured," or, at any rate, "beaten with shoes and with sticks," by the police during four days. But "no such examination was made." Again, there was "the book kept by the officer in charge of the lock-up, in which, under section 24, clause 2, of Act IX. of 1894, should have been entered a record of all wounds and marks on the persons of each of those men when they were admitted into the lock-up." Were the entries duly made in the book, or were there no "wounds or marks" to enter? Anyhow, "that evidence was not placed before the court, and its absence has not been explained." The Deputy Magistrate "does not appear to have concerned himself as to whether the alleged torture had left any marks upon the person of the accused." The District Superintendent of Police, however, and the District Magistrate, deposed to having examined these persons; but the former could not tell which of the prisoners it was he examined, and the latter's observations were at variance with the allegations of the prisoners themselves. Such an incompetent muddle affords but meagre grounds for crowing over the excellence of the official administration of justice in India.

Elsewhere we print an official communication in which the Government of India at length announces that the Japanese Government have agreed to the adhesion of India to the Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and Japan which was signed on July 16, 1894. It is many months since we drew attention to the slackness of the Government in delaying to take steps to secure for Indian traders the advantages of the treaty; and we have pleasure in acknowledging that certain of the foremost Anglo-Indian journals also urged the point. Sir William Wedderburn raised the question in the House of Commons, but Mr. St. John Brodrick did not throw a flood of light on the matter. The Government has taken its time, with its usual leisureliness. Of course, as the official communication says, "meanwhile this country is actually enjoying the advantages which will be formally assured to her by the treaty," but that it is a very tame affair indeed, and no sort of justification for the dilatory conduct of the Government. We quote, in another column, the remarks of the *Times of India*, which plainly and justly characterises the episode as "the reverse of creditable to the Indian Foreign Department."

The Indian Social Conference met at Lucknow immediately after the Indian National Congress, on December 30. The place of meeting suggested to Mr. Justice Ranade as the subject of his inaugural address the lessons to be derived from the inter-relations of Mahometans and Hindus in Northern India. The early misunderstandings and misappreciations of ignorance and prejudice were brushed away by the great Akbar, who was the first to realise the conception of "a united India in which Hindus and Mahometans, such of them as had become permanently established in the country, were to take part in the building of an edifice rooted in the hearts of both by common interests and common ambitions." Hence resulted "a fusion of thoughts and ideas which benefitted both communities, making the Mahometans less bigoted, and the Hindus more puritanic and more single-minded in their devotion." Unhappily the revival of fanaticism under Aurungzebe marred the completeness of the fusion; "and in the course of years, both communities have developed weaknesses of character which still need the disciplinary process to be continued for a longer time under other masters." There could be no greater service to his compatriots than this firm indication by Mr. Justice Ranade of the necessity for strong discipline on the lines of a closer union.

"Both Hindus and Mahometans," says Mr. Justice Ranade, "lack many of those virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority." In particular, he proceeds:—

> Both are wanting in the matter of municipal freedom, in the exercise of virtues necessary for civic life, and in aptitudes for mechanical skill, in the love of science and research, in the love of daring adventures of discovery, the resolution to master difficulties, and in chivalrous respect for womankind.

This is plain and severe speech, but it will do no harm to hold up a high standard and challenge men to come up to it, even though the expression may afford a handle to the foreign reviler of both communities alike. Again:

> Every effort on the part of either Hindus or Mahometans to regard their interests as separate and distinct, every attempt made by the two communities to create separate schools and interests among themselves, and not to heal up the wounds inflicted by mutual hatred of caste and creed, must be deprecated on all hands. It is to be feared that this lesson has not been sufficiently kept in mind by the leaders of both communities in their struggle for existence, and in the acquisition of power and predominance during recent years. The Conference which brings us together is especially intended for the propagation of this "Din" or "Dharma." . . . The ills that we are suffering are, most of them, self-inflicted evils, the cure of which is to a large extent in our own hands. . . . Pursuit of high ideas, mutual sympathy and co-operation, perfect tolerance, a correct understanding of the diseases from which the body politic is suffering, and an earnest desire to apply suitable remedies—this is the work cut out for the present generation.

The whole address is most able, opportune, and elevated in tone. We commend it earnestly to the study of all whom it may concern, and not least to the rulers of India themselves.

The Mahometan Educational Conference opened its thirteenth Session at Calcutta, on December 27, under the presidency of Mr. Justice Amír Ali, and before it concluded its work it was graced by a visit from the Lieutenant-Govenor of Bengal. Five hundred delegates are stated to have been present from all parts of India. We have always looked upon this assemblage with not a little hope. Surely this is not the first time that the following excellent resolution has been passed:—

> That it is essential for the progress and well-being of the Mahometan community that a sound and liberal English education in conjunction with a knowledge of their own literature and ethics should be given so as to make them loyal citizens, good workers, and useful and honourable members of society.

Be this as it may, the Conference is of opinion "that the education imparted in Madras and in Bengal is not conducive to the proper training of Mahometan youths." This manifest anxiety about education is an extremely good sign, if only the judgment directing the changes desired be equal to the apparent earnestness of the Conference. Only the desire for knowledge carries with it a considerable quantity of regulative force. The serious pursuit of improved education is the best and the necessary course to enable the Mahometan community to take its proper place in the social and political life of the time.

Mr. Bipin Bihari Bose has published in aid of the Congress Committee's Funds a little collection entitled "Congress Songs and Ballads." To write poetry in a foreign language is a difficult task, which has tried the powers of the greatest masters of verse. But Mr. Bose's work has an interest, quite apart from any question of language or metre, in the noble and patriotic sentiments to which he gives expression. His belief in the unity of India and the duty that falls on all Indians to work together for their suffering country, his hope in the new era, and his generous appreciation of the great Englishmen—and Irishmen—of the past, cannot fail to redound to the credit of the writer.

THE CAUSES OF INDIAN FAMINES.

EVERY mail brings worse and worse accounts of the Indian famine. Already the numbers on relief works have risen to three-and-a-quarter millions, and the time of trial is only beginning. To the want of food is added the want of water. On all hands it is allowed that the intensity of the present famine exceeds even that of 1897, and when it is remembered how short a time has elapsed since then, the urgency of finding some remedy for this recurring scourge becomes apparent. Famine relief is a hard necessity but no cure. The prevention of famine should be the aim of Government. This was not the problem submitted to the Famine Commission, but it is the problem that cries out for solution. Nor is it surprising, considering its magnitude, that the Government should be reluctant to grapple with it. An enquiry into the causes of famine must be also an enquiry into the poverty of India; and from such an enquiry the most costly Government in the world naturally shrinks. The more the economic wounds of India were probed, the more likely would it be that the imposing edifice of official optimism would be shaken. And it is so much easier to refer everything to the failure of the rains, and to refuse to go further back. Yet if it was difficult to maintain this attitude during the last famine, will it not soon be impossible to do so during the present? These recurrent famines are becoming the shame of our Indian Administration, and to refuse enquiry is to admit defeat. Just as the Government is ready to attribute everything to the failure of the rains, so it is more ready to admit the necessity of irrigation than of reform in its financial measures. It has no objection to any attempts at improvement provided that they do not touch an almost perfect administration. Now it is certain that great things have been done by irrigation, both in large schemes on river deltas and in smaller efforts over a wider area. But as a means of extirpating famine irrigation fails in two ways; for, first, large districts of India cannot be irrigated; and, secondly, the increasing land tax is always threatening to eat up the advantages derived from irrigation. Even as poverty lies at the root of famine, so it hampers the introduction of further irrigation, especially where the water cannot be obtained as part of some great scheme. Irrigation is an excellent thing, but for the cure of famine we must go deeper still. It is certain, too, that a population depending exclusively on agriculture—or for that matter on any one industry—is in a precarious situation. Now, in India, the great mass of the people live by the land, and except in a few centres this is becoming more and more accentuated. European manufactures have killed the old village industries. That new industrial developments would relieve the pressure on the land is undoubtedly true, but these must be a matter of time. Nor can their effect be other than partial. There are more powerful and more immediate causes of India's poverty than even the loss of her village industries.

The natural remedy for scarcity in a bad year is to husband the surplus in good years; and that was once the custom in India. Sir William Wedderburn has said that in the early days of his Indian service every rayat, however poor, had a little store of grain put away in a store-room under his house, sufficient to last his family two or three years. But this is no longer the case. The peasant no longer has his store, and therefore he falls at the first pinch of scarcity. And if it be asked why he no longer lays by in prosperous years for times of dearth, the answer is not that he has become reckless and extravagant; for the rayat is the most prudent and abstemious of men, and the family festivals, when he is sometimes lavish, are certainly celebrated with no more extravagance than in times gone by. The answer can only be that he is steeped even more in poverty, and that the difficulty of living even in good years makes it impossible to provide for the bad. But when it becomes evident that the want of irrigation and the loss of manufactures are not at the root of famine, the Government has still a defence behind which it can screen itself. It finds the usurer in every village oppressing the people and it cries out that here is the ultimate cause of Indian poverty. But this is, indeed, to confuse cause with effect. No man, as Mr. Dutt has pointed out, flies to the usurer because he loves him or desires to be in his debt. He borrows because he must; and if we would reach the well-spring of Indian poverty, we must discover the reasons which force the rayat to betake himself to the usurer. It is true that under our rule the money-lender has obtained powers unknown before; and the Courts, following European precedents, have enforced the payment of debts with an inflexibility that puts the debtor at the mercy of his creditor. Nevertheless since the usurer can force no man to borrow of him, and since the more terrible his powers, the greater the disinclination to be his debtor, it must follow that the usurer lives and thrives on the conditions which force the rayat to borrow. Why, then, does the rayat have recourse to the money-lender? Because he cannot otherwise pay the land-tax. It is sometimes said that the land in India is not over-rented, that in past ages even more was extorted from the cultivator, and that even where the assessment is heavy, it is enforced with an unbending impartiality which compares well with the chances and favouritism of old times. But in the eyes of the Indians it is this very rigidity in collection which is the greatest hardship. The continual rise in the assessment at each revision is hard to bear. But it is the difficulty of gaining remission in bad years—the necessity of meeting the Government's demand or forfeiting his homestead, which crushes the peasant's spirit or drives him to seek a respite at the hands of the money-lender. An excessive revenue, collected in a harsh and rigid way—that, with the protection of our Courts, is the seed-ground of the usurer; and to attack the usurer while leaving it as necessary as ever for the peasant to borrow, is only to touch the superficial symptoms of poverty, while leaving the true causes out of sight. But when we speak of excessive revenue, rigidly collected, we still have not reached the end of the chain. The Government officials no more increase the assessments for the pleasure of harrying the rayats than the rayat goes to the money-lender for the pleasure of borrowing. The heavy land-tax, the rigid collection, the rising assessment are the necessary results of a system of government which, whatever its other merits, has the great demerit of being enormously costly. To keep up such a government requires a great and growing revenue; and in a country where four-fifths of the inhabitants are agricultural, the land-tax is one of its most obvious sources. It would, therefore, seem that a decrease in the land-tax or its less rigid collection implies a greater economy in administration, the avoidance of all extraordinary expenditure, whether military or civil, and a gradual but decided reduction in the ordinary expenditure of the country.

But it may well be argued that chains of causation often have a weak link and that the strength of the strongest arguments must depend on the evidence on which they are based; and therefore that an enquiry into the life and circumstances of the Indian villager is necessary. This has all along been the contention of the leaders of Indian opinion and their supporters in this country. Sir William Wedderburn has propounded a scheme which at once harmonises with the methods of investigation that have been successful in other fields and can be carried out at small expense. Those who are acquainted with Mr. Charles Booth's work on London will recognise the difference between the reliance on bare statistics, which was the mark of an older school of enquirers, and the new method. Mr. Booth selected typical streets and households for full and particular investigation and thus obtained an insight into the distribution of poverty in London such as no study of statistics would ever have given him. In fact it is becoming more and more recognised that for the interpretation of statistics the study of some typical cases is necessary. Now Sir William Wedderburn's proposal is to hold an enquiry in certain typical villages in various parts of India. As he said, "the village community was the microcosm of all India; and if they could discover the means to make one village prosperous, they held the clue to make all prosperous." No Imperial Commission would be necessary; in each Province the local administration would be ordered to select typical villages and appoint a Committee to make a thorough investigation. On the Committees there should be Europeans and Indians, officials and non-officials. Now could there be a proposal easier to put in execution or more likely to add to our real knowledge of the position of the Indian rayat? If the Government refuse this, without proposing any alternative method of enquiry, it can only be because they fear all investigation that goes beyond the failure of the rains.

THE VISITATIONS OF FAMINE.

"IT is evident," wrote the Secretary of State for India (Lord Salisbury) in his despatch of January 10, 1878, "that the protection of the people of India from the effects of the uncertainty of the seasons will constitute in the future no inconsiderable portion of the work of the Government. It is, therefore, a duty to collect with the utmost care all information which may assist future administrators in the task of limiting the range or mitigating the intensity of these calamities." The Indian Famine Commission of that year, under the presidency of General R. Strachey, and with Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Caird as a prominent member, accordingly set to work, and presented a most able and valuable Report. The question will arise: Why were these enquiries postponed to the year of grace, 1878? Why had the necessity for them not become "evident" to the Government any day during a century preceding? For famine was no new phenomenon in India, and famine, too, of intense severity. It would be rather tiresome to summarise the history of Indian famines from a date when the facts may be said to be ascertained with fair accuracy; but a general impression may be gained from the following table which is taken from page 23 of Part I of the Report (C, 2591, of 1880):—

	Bengal.			N.-W.P. & Punjab.			R'jput'na & C. India			Bombay.			Madras.			All India.		
	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.	Severity.	Years. Duration.	Years. Interval.
1769-70	***	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	1	—
1782-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	13	**	2	13	**	1	12
1783-4	*	1	13	***	1	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	1	—
1791-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	22	***	1	8	**	1	7	***	1	7
1802-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	10	—	—	—	**	1	10
1803-4	—	—	—	**	1	19	**	1	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	—
1806-7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	13	**	1	2
1812-13	—	—	—	*	1	8	*	1	8	**	1	9	—	—	—	**	1	5
1823-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	16	**	1	10
1824-5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	—	—	—	—	—	*	1	—
1832-3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	1	8	***	1	7
1833-4	—	—	—	*	1	20	*	1	20	*	1	8	—	—	—	*	1	—
1837-8	—	—	—	***	1	3	**	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	1	3
1838-9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	1	4	—	—	—	*	1	—
1844-5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	1	5	—	—	—	*	1	5
1853-4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	20	**	1	8
1860-1	—	—	—	**	1	22	*	1	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	6
1865-6	***	2	81	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	11	***	2	4
1868-9	—	—	—	**	1	7	***	2	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	2	1
1873-4	**	1	6	*	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**	1	3
1876-7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	***	2	31	***	2	10	***	2	2
1877-8	—	—	4	**	1	3	*	1	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total No. of Famines or Scarcities ...	4	—	—	9	—	—	8	—	—	9	—	—	8	—	—	21	—	—
Total No. of Yrs. affected by Famine...	—	5	—	—	9	—	—	9	—	—	10	—	—	10	—	—	24	—
Total No. of Years of Interval without Famine	—	—	104	—	—	100	—	—	99	—	—	99	—	—	99	—	—	85
Average No. of years of Interval without Famine	—	—	26	—	—	11	—	—	13	—	—	11	—	—	12	—	—	4

N.B.—One asterisk denotes a severe scarcity. Two asterisks denote a famine. Three asterisks denote an intense famine.

The table is, on the face of it, not quite complete, but taking it as it stands, and refraining from particular enquiry into the official difference between a "severe scarcity" and a "famine," we can see that within a little over a hundred years there were in India no fewer than nine famines (to say nothing of four severe scarcities) and eight "intense" famines. Besides, in the latter half of the table, the famines are coming to be of markedly more frequent recurrence and of markedly deeper intensity. From 1865-6 to 1876-7, again, there are three "intense famines" each lasting for two years instead of the customary one year. The Report sums up the conclusions of the Commissioners in these terms (p. 25):—

> The Government of India must be prepared for the occurrence of scarcity, in some degree of severity and in some part of the country, as often as two years out of every nine; and great famines may be anticipated at average intervals of twelve years. The danger of extreme famine in any one province or locality arises on the average not oftener than once in fifty years; though drought followed by severe distress must be expected as often as once in eleven or twelve years. The records are not of a nature to enable us to form any decided opinion whether droughts have recurred more frequently of late years than formerly; but, bearing in mind the far greater attention paid to these visitations recently, our general conclusion is adverse to such a supposition.

The main cause of famines has been, and is, officially held to be extreme drought; and if droughts did not recur more frequently during the preceding twenty years, it seems difficult to account, on the official theory, for the facts of the table from 1860-61 onwards. Again, the above summary, though interesting enough in an historical point of view, seems to be singularly devoid of practical value. The average is a long time in proving helpful so long as there is so much irregularity in the recurrence of the famines. Bengal was safe for eighty-one years, yet the next visitation came in six years. In 1876-77 famine raged in Bombay and Madras; and the very next year it invaded the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, Rajputana and Central India. Droughts may be to some extent controlled by afforestation, but the true remedy must lie in prevention. Meantime, no man can say when or where there is to be famine, and there is need of constant outlook and permanent readiness for combat.

It would be impossible without elaborate tables of figures (which are but scantily available for the earlier half of the century) to indicate with any approach to definiteness the fearful results of those visitations. They must be left to more or less vague conjecture, which, after all, will scarcely outdo the grim realities. A few figures may indeed be given as a sort of basis, though one can hardly hope that even these will be grasped by the liveliest imagination. In 1860-61, in the North-West Provinces and the Punjab, a population of 20,000,000 were affected; the average daily number on relief works was 34,100; the cost to Government was Rs. 45,57,300. Colonel Baird Smith calculated, more or less roughly, that the loss experienced by the agriculturists, amounted to about 225 lakhs. In 1865-66, the population affected numbered 47,600,000; in 1868-69, 44,400,000; in 1873-74, 21,400,000; and in 1876-78, 58,300,000. In the two last-mentioned famines, the total cost to the Government was Rs. 6,75,95,700 and 11,19,43,200 respectively. And beyond all such figures lie untold distresses short of famine, seeds of much future illness, and dire material loss.

The Commission of 1878 must always mark an epoch in the history of Indian famines, for up till that date "no general famine policy had been enunciated by Government"; "the Commission had to formulate a policy and to evolve general principles for guidance in the actual presence of famine." And even more important than that was the duty laid upon them to advise upon measures likely to "diminish the severity of famines or place the people in a better condition for enduring them." In the meantime we continue the gloomy list, adding below the "minor famines and scarcities" that have occurred from 1880 (the date of the Famine Commission's Report) down to the late severe famine of 1896-97. The table is taken from the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898 (C. 9,178), page 42.[1] To complete the story so far, it must be added that the famine of 1896-97 affected an area of some 225,000 square miles in British India, and a population of 62,000,000, and more than half the area and population severely; and that, in the direct relief of distress, apart from loans and advances to landholders and cultivators and remissions of land revenue, it cost the Government some 727 lakhs (Rx. 7,270,000).

These outlines furnish but the large features of a formidable national and imperial enemy, whose onsets appear to be both more frequently recurrent and more disastrous than ever. On another occasion it may be well to survey the action that the Government has taken at various stages of the conflict for the disablement of the enemy and the protection of the Indian populations; and to enquire whether, and if so in what direction, this action needs to be supplemented.

[1] Province affected.	Year of the famine or scarcity.	Area affected in square miles.	Population affected.	Maximum daily number employed on relief works.	Maximum daily number relieved gratuitously.
Punjab	1884	—	—	4,620	—
Lower Bengal	1884-85	970	472,000	20,800	—
Madras	1884-85	3,000	—	—	—
Central Provinces	1886-87	—	—	—	—
Behar	1888-89	1,000	—	42,000	4,000
Orissa (Tributary States) ...	1889	—	100,000	900	2,700
Madras (Ganjam)	1888-89	2,500	1,100,000	21,000	104,000
Kumaun and Garhwal... ...	1890	—	—	—	—
Kumaun Division and Dehra Dun	1892	—	—	—	—
Madras	1891-92	22,700	—	92,583	6,961
Bombay (Deccan)	1891-92	9,484	1,467,000	5,700	—
Bengal and Behar	1891-92	5,710	3,880,000	77,800	2,580
Upper Burma	1891-92	10,000	800,000	30,000	—
Ajmere-Merwara	1890-93	2,710	543,000	33,913	—

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

THREE AND A-QUARTER MILLIONS ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received (January 15) the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the scarcity in India:—

Winter rains still hold off. Situation unaltered. Number of persons in receipt of relief: Bombay, 682,000; Punjab, 124,000; Central Provinces, 1,374,000; Berar, 235,000; Ajmere-Merwara, 107,000; Rajputana States, 199,000; Central India States, 53,000; Bombay Native States, 336,000; Baroda, 63,000; North-Western Provinces, 4,000; Punjab Native States, 1,000—total, 3,178,000.

A Reuter's telegram from Calcutta dated Tuesday last, said:—

"The severity of the cattle famine in India is shown by the shipment of 74 lakhs' worth of hides from Calcutta last month, as compared with 12 lakhs' worth in December, 1898.

"The Government has decided to commence no fresh railways in the current year, owing to the heavy calls on the Exchequer on account of the prevalent scarcity."

The Calcutta correspondent of the *Times*, telegraphing on January 16, said:—"The latest reports from Burma show that the rice crop is a record one, over 2,020,000 tons of cargo rice being available for export to foreign countries. Burma is also able to supply a practically unlimited quantity to the Indian famine districts.

This is one more proof that what is wanted in the famine districts is not so much food as the money to purchase food.

The India Office has issued the following first forecast of the wheat crop for the season 1899-1900:—

North-Western Provinces and Oudh.—Rainfall in August and September was generally insufficient in the western districts, while October and November have been altogether rainless. The soil was consequently very dry at seed time, and in some places artificial irrigation was necessary to enable the crop to be sown. Germination has been good, and the crop is now being watered from all available sources. Prospects of the irrigated crop are so far good; but in dry lands everything depends on a fall of rain within the month. Owing to drought and the high price of seed the area is likely to fall short of the normal by 15 per cent. This represents condition up to December 10.

Central Provinces.—Although the preparation of the land was exceptionally good, the season has been exceptionally unfavourable. There has been no rain since the middle of September, and little or no reserve of moisture in the soil, while dew has been almost totally absent. In only three districts—Saugor, Damoh, and Bilaspur—is the area sown believed to be larger than last year's, and in these last year's area was exceptionally short. Elsewhere the area is very short. The earliest sowings terminated well, the later poorly, and no re-sowing has been found possible. In the northern wheat districts and in parts of Bilaspur the condition of the crop is still fair, and with rain at the end of December or early in January the best lands may give a moderate outturn. Elsewhere there is no such hope. Withering has set in, the plants are stunted and thin and have come into ear prematurely. With early rain a sprinkling of fields, or a few small groups of villages, might yield a small outturn, but the general yield must be very poor indeed; without rain, failure will be almost total.

First Forecast of the Linseed and Rapeseed Crops for 1899-1900, North-Western Provinces and Oudh (condition up to December 10).—Owing to continued want of rain the ground was in many districts too dry for sowing without previous irrigation. Sowings were late in some districts. The seed has germinated well, and prospects depend mainly on the future rainfall. Sowings have been greatly restricted, especially in double cropped lands, and the areas under linseed and rapeseed are estimated to be respectively 30 and 20 per cent. less than the normal area.

Central Provinces.—Linseed has suffered even more than wheat from the present great drought. In most districts the area has largely contracted, owing to the absence of moisture at sowing time. Germination has generally been very defective, and in many places has failed altogether. In the northern districts, with rain, a small crop may come to maturity; in the rest of the province linseed has almost entirely perished, or will give but a nominal yield. No rain can now save it.

The *Friend of India* (December 28) says:—A further great rise has taken place during the past week, in the number of persons under famine relief, the total throughout India having now gone up to two and a-half millions, of whom more than a million are in the Central Provinces. It is noticeable that a great reduction has of late been taking place in the proportion under gratuitous relief in the last-named area. This is because it was at first hoped that early winter rains would obviate the necessity of transferring the Central Provinces villagers from their homes to central relief-works. Help was accordingly given, in the beginning, in the form of village doles. Now that the extent of the calamity is, unfortunately, no longer doubtful, this has been changed, and the usual procedure, of making all able-bodied applicants for relief go upon the works, is being followed. The latest information shows that the failure of the November rains in the Madras Deccan has seriously added to the area that will need relief.

The Madras Government (says the *Madras Mail*) will be obliged to make considerable reductions in its expenditure if, as seems likely, famine relief works have to be opened within the next few weeks. Its scale of expenditure on useful public objects has been seriously curtailed for many years past, and there seems no end to the period of retrenchment and cheese-paring. A good fall of Christmas rain would even now go far to save the situation, however.

A SAD STORY.

We take the following from the *Indian Spectator* of December 24:—

A singularly touching case of crime through poverty came up the other day before the High Court on appeal from the judgment of the Sessions Judge of Khandesh. The accused, a poor woman of the peasant class, was convicted of murder and attempt to commit suicide under the following circumstances, and sentenced to transportation for life. Having had nothing to eat for three days for herself and for her two little ones, aged six and four years, she waited for an opportunity when her husband was away, and jumped into the well, with her two sons in her arms. "In her confession, she said that she deliberately jumped into the well, taking her two sons in her arms, to put an end to the lives of all of them together. She had been starving for three days; she said that, while on her way to her sister's village, she felt giddy and lay down under a *nim* tree; that her two sons rolled about, fighting for the first possession of a little piece of bread which she had tied up in a rag; and that she was poor and starving, and was tired of life." Here is material for at least two striking pictures of the humanity which Christ came nineteen centuries ago to serve—the two little boys scrambling and fighting for a piece of bread, tied up in a rag, beside their swooning mother, under a *nim* tree; the devoted woman stepping down into the well with her two loved ones in her arms; and for a background to these terrible pictures, the pitiless heavens brooding sullenly over a stricken land desolate unto death. She was a dutiful wife and loving mother, was Bhimi, and "would go without food to supply what little there was in the house to her husband and sons. In spite of all their extreme poverty, however, they had the pride of their caste; and Supadu, the husband, said in the evidence that people of his caste (Leva Kunabis) would prefer death to begging." That is again typical of poor India—the pride of race triumphant even over the pangs of hunger. The Sessions Judge has intimated his intention of recommending the mother martyr to the mercy of Government, and we trust mercy she will have in full.

So much as to the judicial aspect of the case. Let us turn a little to its administrative aspect. The husband of the accused, the bread-winner of the family, was a small peasant, owning a field bearing assessment of a rupee and a-half. The tragedy above mentioned took place on the morning of August 21 last. On that day the woman and her children had starved for three days. The husband had brothers, as poor as himself, and so had the accused. These facts were established by evidence before a Court of Justice. They show that so early as August last a number of cultivators in Khandesh were starving for days together. Now, the Government has made itself responsible for deaths from starvation. A person is said to die of starvation, in official parlance, if he has had no food for three days previous to death. If the testimony adduced in this case is true, there were people on that day who had had no food for three days and more. Did the village officials know nothing of it? Did the Taluk and district authorities make any efforts to afford relief to the sufferers? We regard it as nothing short of scandalous that, under a humane Government, in a civilised country, an honest and hardworking family should be allowed to starve for three days without help and sympathy being tendered to them. What were the neighbours doing? We have often pointed out that our relief measures break down at a most sensitive point, where they ought to afford the strongest protection. Here is a painful illustration. We almost wish that they had let poor Bhimi die with her children. It is a cruel mockery of justice to rescue her, convict her, and transport her for life.

THE FAMINE IN BARODA.

The following article by Miss Alison Garland (delegate of the British Committee to the Indian National Congress) appeared in the *Morning Leader* of January 11. It is dated from Baroda, December 22.

An account by an eye-witness of the famine in India would probably interest your readers and help them to realise the great extent of the calamity that has befallen many parts of this country. In this letter I will deal with the Baroda territory only.

Last summer only 2½in. of rain fell, and that, too, at different times, instead of the average quantity, which varies from 35in. to 60in. The consequence is that the land is as parched and dry as it is possible to conceive. The grass is like hay—yellow with age. The

river beds are empty, with a tiny trickle seen at the bottom of some of them—not all. The mud banks are dry and hard. The trees even have a withered appearance, especially the bamboo trees. Those of larger growth with their roots deep down in the earth are fairly green. At this season of the year the whole country should be flourishing in all the bloom of spring.

The first to suffer from the dearth have been the cattle. They are dying from thirst and hunger in thousands. While at Bombay and Bandora last week, I saw truck loads of cattle skins arriving daily. Each truck was piled with the skins of bullocks and cows from the famine district. One firm alone bought 80 tons of them.

At Baroda, one sees the cattle dying like flies. They are simply skin and bone, every rib sticking out as if upon some skeleton. Some of them crawl along in a feeble way, others lie down too much exhausted to move, and next day their carcases are taken away and sold for what the skin will fetch. These animals are worth from 50 to 100 rupees each. Yet fodder is so scarce and dear that the owners are offering them for sale at *one* rupee each, and even that offer is not eagerly snatched up.

This morning the Dewan (the Minister of State) called on me. He said they could not hope to save more than 30 per cent. of the cattle, and that means a terrible loss to a purely agrarian people, who depend so much on the milk from the cows and the labour of the bullocks in ploughing and for draught work. It will take years to recover the prosperity of former times.

Mr. Santo Crimp, the celebrated water engineer, is also staying at the Rájá's Guest House, where I am comfortably located. He has been driving round the villages to-day, and to-night has given me a fearful report. In some places the people have to go three miles for water for drinking purposes, all being carried in pots on the heads of the people. "The prospects for the future are depressing in the extreme—there seems to be little chance of obtaining water even for drinking purposes unless it is carted very long distances, and as many of the villages are unapproachable owing to the state of the roads, even this relief is of limited application."

If this is the state of affairs now, what will it be when the hot weather sets in—in March, April, and May? Probably no rain will fall till the middle of June! The people themselves are suffering greatly now, and are flocking in thousands to the relief works.

I visited some of these works yesterday. Over 3,000 people—men, women, and children—were employed at them. The Government authorities—this is a Native State—have taken advantage of the labour at their disposal to fill up a large hollow piece of ground near the station; also to alter the channel of the bed of the dried-up river for a short distance. The men are employed in digging the sand from a mound, and the women, the girls, and the boys, carry it in small baskets on their heads a distance of 200 or 300 yards.

They worked well and looked, from a distance, like a swarm of ants. Some of them were very thin—the children's arms and legs were like drumsticks—but the worst cases are not given work to do till a few days of regular feeding have strengthened them for even this light labour.

Already the poverty of the last few months has told on them. Their bright-coloured garments—red, yellow, and blue—are faded and ragged, and there is a noticeable lack of ornaments. Coming from the Bombay districts, where even the poorest woman usually had some article of silver jewellery about her—either a nose ring, a bracelet, anklet, or a ring on one of her toes, the first thing that struck me was to see so many thousands of people with no silver visible at all. The little children carried tiny baskets on their heads and most demurely tripped along.

It seemed to me hard that relief could not be given to these little ones without exacting this small return of labour, but the Dewan told me that only children who had reached the age of eight years were employed, and that such children usually began work in the fields at that age in the villages!

The wages given to men are nine pice (nine farthings) a day. Women get seven pice, and children five. This is about half the average wage of labour in these parts. So far only the people from the villages have availed themselves of the relief works. It is not always that they can get as far as the depôts. Some die on the way. One man died three miles away this afternoon; others offer their children for sale, at almost any price. One little child was offered at four annas a day or two ago—that means 4d. in our money! If the few pence are not forthcoming, the parents entreat the passers-by to take the child for nothing, as anything is better than to see it starve before their eyes. If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry? The Native Government is very energetic and has done all that it can. But already there are 60,000 people on relief works, and the number is certain to increase largely as the New Year begins.

The Gaekwar (the title of the Mahárájá) is personally conducting the organisation of the relief works. I had an interview with his Highness yesterday at the Palace. He said he would leave no stone unturned to help his people, but Baroda is not a rich State, and such a calamity as a 2½ inches rainfall in twelve months has not befallen this part of the country within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

To-morrow I go to Ahmedabad, and shall write a letter from there. Meanwhile, I hope this short account of the distress in Baroda will appeal to the hearts of the charitable in England, and that some money will be sent to relieve the distress. Twopence a day will feed one person. So the poorest at home might help their afflicted fellow-subjects of the Queen in India.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE BRITISH PRESS.

The *Investors' Review* writes (January 13): There is much force in the subjoined letter, but where is the money to come from to inaugurate a new and better system of cultivation in India? We, as its rulers, have allowed things to drift along in the old grooves, scarce noticing the forests disappear and the land becoming more and more barren. We doubt also whether the State is really more lenient as a landlord than the zemindars to whom we made such a generous gift of freehold rights in the permanent settlement of Bengal. The State goes too much on averages, and cannot settle rents except *en bloc*. It may thus perpetrate injustice without intending it, and its necessities always make it eager to collect arrears even when they have arisen through the ravages of famine. Then, also, the centralisation of our administrative, and especially of our revenue system, is bad in that it draws the rents wholly into the Government Treasuries, whence it passes away to England to meet the cost of internal administration, to maintain the pomp of the Viceroy's court—never back to the districts where it was collected, to stimulate and vivify industries there, to be spent upon wells and tanks, on irrigation channels, on improved tillage, on reforestings. We do our improvements on a great wholesale system of big works, and all the while India is such a poor "retail" country, demanding the initiation and supervision of minute improvements:—

To the Editor.

1, Akenside Road, Fitzjohn's Avenue, N.W.
January 6, 1900.

Dear Sir,—On page 7 of your last issue you quote Mr. Dutt as saying "we must make it possible for them (the cultivators)—*as it is possible in Bengal*—to save in good years against failure of harvest in bad years."

Is it possible in Bengal? I very much doubt it. Possible for the zemindars no doubt, but not for the cultivators. I must explain that the land in Bengal, under the Permanent Settlement, belongs to private persons, called zemindars or landholders, but in the rest of India to Government. I imagine the Government is a much easier landlord than the Bengal zemindars. I could not, without more intimate knowledge than I possess, say whether the settlements in other parts of India press too hardly on the people or not, but I am pretty sure that Lower Bengal owes whatever immunity from famine it may have to its uniform climate and not to any prosperity on the part of its cultivators.

The Bengal Permanent Settlement is generally admitted to have been a huge mistake. It made over to private individuals, without any equivalent, that unearned increment or rent which is the natural public revenue of every country.

Mr. Dutt says that the Indian population does not increase so fast as the German or English. That may be, and yet it may increase too fast. The circumstances of England and Germany are quite different from those of India.

The grand cause of famine in India is an exhausted soil and bad cultivation. The Indian surface soil is bankrupt of phosphoric acid, that essential element of plant food. This can only be restored by manure or deep cultivation, both of which are beyond the means of the impoverished rayat. It is not water only but food that the plant lacks. Its food has been exported or dissipated instead of being returned to the soil. The yield in good years is insufficient to compensate for the deficiency in bad ones. The country has been deforested (I speak of Hindostan and the Deccan) and the burning winds lick up its moisture. Were it deeply cultivated the soil would hold the water like a sponge, but merely scratched as it is, it is dried up like a sheet of paper. Consequently any delay in the monsoon prevents germination or scorches up the shallow roots of the cereals. Who will plough up India twelve inches deep? Who will afforest her burning plains? Who will prohibit the export of vegetable produce without a return in some other form of the mineral plant food it contains? He who does these things will put a stop to Indian famine.—Yours faithfully,

J. R. Baillie.

The "New Age."

While our minds are fully occupied with the Transvaal war, we are apt to forget that some three millions of our Indian fellow-subjects are on relief works in India, and that many millions more are on the verge of famine. The Simla correspondent of the *Standard*, writing about a month ago (December 14), stated that "should the winter rain, no sign of which is at present forthcoming, fail, as did the monsoon showers, then the winter crops on unirrigated land will be irretrievably lost, and famine of the most acute description will be in the land." Unhappily, the winter rain, we now know, has in fact failed, and the state of Western India and the Central Provinces is heartbreaking. Already, in some parts of the affected districts, says the correspondent, "the people are becoming listless, and giving up all hope." Such fatalism is quite natural, but it will result in evil effects on the ignorant popular view of the Government, which will wish, when too late, that it had listened more attentively to the incessant pleadings of the Congress for a policy of prevention. In other districts, "in the Northern Punjab, for instance, the people are rapidly becoming lawless and desperate," and there is no means of dealing with them in the ordinary process of law. "Thus, on the mere warning of famine—for there is no 'official' famine in the Northern Punjab yet!—all the riff-raff of the community are let loose to exploit the law-abiding people, and there is no redress." "Is it strange," asks the correspondent—and he is correspondent for the *Standard*, observe—"that these simple peasants wonder if there be really a Sirkar (Government) after all, and, if so, why such things should be allowed in the great Queen's 'raj' (kingdom)?" It is not to be supposed that the enormous numbers on relief works are loafers, for the correspondent explicitly affirms that men do not go on relief "until they have nothing whatever themselves," and have eaten up even "the seed corn put by

for the next sowings." Now go beyond the millions of relief people, and imagine the further millions that are pressed by scarcity and coming destitution. The Government has taken measures in good time, and has been doing its best; but now there are dark indications of difficulty. It is ominous to learn that "a resolution of enquiry" has been passed—enquiry into the carefulness of the administration of the famine funds, it is said. We cannot too soon have the text of this resolution laid before the public, for the Secretary of State has declared that "the Government (of India) is pledged to spare neither outlay nor effort in the attempt to relieve distress and save life in the present famine." To recur to the *Standard* correspondent: "As it is, all public works which cannot serve also as famine relief works have had to be stopped for want of funds; and if the next few weeks should bring with them no rain, there can be no doubt whatever that the Budget will disclose a heavy deficit." There is grievous waste in the public works, and the belauded surplus, artificial at the best, is doomed, for the rain has not come to save it. But surplus, or no surplus, the famine must be fought determinedly, and the Government must see to it at all costs. Is it not about time, however, to consider dispassionately that resolution of the despised, but statesmanlike, Congress, which urges prevention "by moderating the land revenue assessment, curtailing the expenditure (especially for military purposes), and developing native industries"? Meantime, where is the Mansion House "Indian Famine Fund"? (January 11.)

THE "MAHRATTA."

According to the official report, most of the test works and several regular relief works are at present being carried out in some of the affected districts on the system of payment by results, which, it is alleged, has been considered by the Famine Commission to be suitable in the earlier and less acute stages of distress. We have no doubt that this is the direction of the Famine Commission; but the task-work system has been found to work very harshly, as the tasks are often beyond the powers of the labourers, with the result that the labourers actually receive wages which are hardly sufficient to earn them a starving meal on account of the high prices prevailing. Unless, therefore, the tasks are made more light, the patent complaint as to the unsatisfactory nature of relief works will not be removed. (December 24).

THE LUCKNOW CONGRESS.

The following account, taken from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of December 24, of the preparations made for the Congress may be of interest to our English readers:—

The Congress preparations for the reception of the delegates are now all but complete. The reception Committee has been fortunate enough in securing an excellent site for the *pandal* in a very central and frequented part of the city. The *pandal* itself, with its capacity for holding 8,000 persons, its neat *sirki* tops, artistically-designed windows and skylights, and a pennon flying at the top, presents more the smart appearance of a fort from the outside than of the harmless rendezvous of Congress patriots. The compound is studded with a large number of tents and other temporary structures for the officers and working members of the Reception Committee, a drawing room, a reading room, the stores, the stalls for shop-keepers. At the top of the main gate you have a beautiful *pandal* in miniature, and thousands crowd at all hours of the day to feast their eyes with these. Arrangements for housing the President and some of the other most distinguished visitors have been made in an excellent bungalow in Huzrutgunj, and a large number of other *pucca* buildings have been engaged for the other delegates at a distance of a mile or so from the Pandal Grounds, and ticca gharis will be in attendance to take them to and bring them back from the Pandal, and both the O. and R. R. and R. K. R. authorities have been kind enough to make special concessions and run special trains for the delegates under certain conditions. The segregation camp of delegates from the plague-infected areas, however, is at some distance. The disinfection rules had created a needless alarm in certain quarters; in certain others there appears to have been lurking grave misgivings about the housing arrangements; but the Reception Committee has very properly taken prompt steps to dispel these.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE "FRIEND OF INDIA."

While unanimity is not to be looked for in such matters as form the subjects of the new Resolutions to be moved at the approaching meeting of the Indian National Congress, there is not one of the Resolutions that is not both practical and timely, or that will not command the support of a large body of unbiassed opinion, British as well as Indian. The first place among the Resolutions is naturally given to that dealing with the subject of the organisation of the Congress itself, which should have been settled long ago. All we need say regarding it is that we trust that the Committee appointed for the purpose will be able to formulate a scheme of constitution which will secure the approval of the Congress and place it on a sound and enduring basis. The second Resolution deals with the vexed and difficult question of agricultural indebtedness in India, and we are thoroughly in accord with the opinion expressed in it, that a solution of the problem is much more likely to be found in a revision of the land laws and the establishment of agricultural banks, than in legislation of the kind lately sanctioned for the Central Provinces, and now proposed, in a modified form, for the Punjab. The third Resolution is devoted to the Currency question; and though we differ from the views expressed in it, we have little doubt that they represent the bulk of instructed Indian opinion as to the probable effect of a gold standard. Clause (*b*) of the Resolution, protesting against the decision of the Currency Commission "to place the reversion to a silver or to any other standard by international agreement beyond question," if it is intended to mean what we imagine, but what is certainly not conveyed by the words, would appear to be based on a misconception. Resolution 4 expresses strong disapproval of the reactionary policy of the Government in the matter of local self government, as evinced by the passing of the Calcutta Municipal Bill and the introduction of a similar measure in the Legislative Council of Bombay, and, as we need scarcely say, has our hearty sympathy. A "complete" return to the frontier policy of Lord Lawrence, advocated in the fifth Resolution, is probably no longer practicable; but we thoroughly concur in the spirit of the Resolution, in its condemnation of recent adventures, and especially in the opinion expressed in it that an adequate share of the cost of frontier expeditions should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer. The same may be said of the view expressed in the sixth Resolution, that a substantial portion of the cost of the British army in India should be transferred to the same shoulders, though we think that the reasoning of the opening part of the Resolution is open to criticism on grounds both of fact and of policy. The seventh Resolution, appealing to the Government, princes, aristocracy, and gentry of India, for support for post-graduate instruction, is hardly open to controversy and calls for no special comment at the moment. The dissociation of the Agricultural from the Revenue Department, and the formation of a Central Agricultural Bureau under European experts, advocated in the eighth Resolution, are reforms which are loudly called for in the interests of the country and would be welcomed on all hands. From the view expressed in the ninth Resolution, that preference should be given to Irrigation Works over Railway extension in India, we emphatically dissent. Resolutions 10 and 11 deal with matters of less moment, the threatened extension of copyright to foreign telegrams, the principle of which is rightly condemned; the present inconvenient restrictions on the encashment of Government Currency Notes, and the recent change in the law by which the burden of proof of *bona fide* possession is thrown upon the holder of a currency note. The final Resolution, urging upon Government the necessity of further reform in the direction of the separation of Executive and Judicial functions, is, perhaps, the most important of all, and will command general sympathy outside the prejudiced circle of Indian officialdom. (December 28).

THE "LAHORE TRIBUNE."

As we write we see in imagination a reflection of the soul-inspiring picture which the capital of the holy kingdom of Ayodhia to-day presents. As we gaze at the spectacle with our mind's eye we are thrilled to the core of our hearts, and our eyes fill with tears. A Valmiki, a Milton, only could do justice to the scene—not the scene which the eye sees, but that which the mind contemplates. At this moment Lucknow is verily the intellectual capital of India. Lucknow is just now the centre of all that is highest and best in the Empire—highest and best in the domains of culture, philanthropy and self-sacrifice. From Assam to Peshawar, and from Kashmir to Comorin, our ancient land has been put in the press of patriotism, as if it were, and the *attar*, the essential perfume of the nation has been extracted and gathered in the Pandal phial at Lucknow. All such in Young India as are not present in body at Lucknow to-day are present there in spirit. And the thunderous cheers that hail the advent of the President-elect echo and re-echo, so to say, throughout the length and breadth of the continent, for all Young India mentally joins in the acclaim. To-morrow the business begins, but three days before the commencement of the Session, the Reception Committee held a sort of preliminary demonstration, to serve as a test, in a manner, of the feelings of the great mass of the citizens of Lucknow towards the national movement. That Sunday will be a day ever memorable in that town. At the hour appointed, thirty thousand people, by the lowest computation, streamed from all sides and converged on the Congress pavilion. Fully one-half of the colossal throng were Mussalmans. From the members of the ex-royal family and the aristocracy to the shop-keepers in the bazar—all were there. The temporary structure, spacious as it is, could only afford room for some seven thousand persons. The rest massed themselves around it. Addresses were delivered from six separate platforms, and resolutions expressing sympathy with the aims and objects of the Congress were passed amidst indications of the greatest enthusiasm.

Even the small body of professed opponents were moved. (December 26).

THE "NEW AGE."

The fifteenth Indian National Congress has been a conspicuously successful gathering, in spite of the repudiation of the movement by a handful of too previous Mahometans. Those gentlemen, in their eagerness to run after officialdom, badly tripped over very patent obstacles. Their eyes should be opened now, and also the eyes of those in this country who may have been misled by the message of the *Times* Calcutta correspondent announcing their futile and preposterous resolutions. Evidently they did not expect to be made ridiculous by the appearance of no fewer than 400 Mahometan delegates at the Congress—400 out of 1,000, a proportion beyond all previous experience, and a remarkably significant demonstration of the power of the Congress in welding the Indians together. More than that, while the Mahometan meeting repudiated the Congress on behalf of "the people of Lucknow," Reuter tells us that the Chairman of the Reception Committee said he had met "with great cordiality from the Hindu and Mahometan population of Lucknow." Of course, the ridiculous Mahometan meeting was simply intended to discount the Congress meeting in England: and to some extent it has been temporarily successful. The *Saturday Review*," for example, took up its absurd complaint that the Congress neglects questions of "the internal reform of the social fabric and the moral and material improvement of the communities of the Indian Empire." The Mahometan resolution was merely disingenuous; the *Saturday* is densely ignorant. The Congress is a political body, and deals with social matters only so far as they can be dealt with politically; the purely social treatment is left to the Indian Social Conference, which meets for the purpose every year in the very same building immediately after the Congress work is done, and which is notoriously and manifestly on the best terms of understanding with the Congress. If, however, the *Saturday* and its congeners choose to expose their ignorance in such a gratuitously blatant form, other people will turn to the resolutions of the Congress and instruct themselves. They will probably soon discern that the moral and material improvement of the country would be vastly promoted by a more intimate knowledge of the people on the part of the rulers, and a more conciliatory policy—two things especially urged by the Congress. Co-operation or despotism: these are the only alternatives now, and we have no doubt which alternative will be favoured by the English at home. Is the Congress to be flouted because it "emphatically and enthusiastically reaffirmed"—what it has been affirming for ten or twelve years—the separation of judicial and executive functions, a reform that has been urged by men of the highest judicial and executive experience for three quarters of a century? The Chupra case alone might well serve to put an end to what Sir Richard Garth, ex-Chief Justice of Bengal, has publicly denounced as a "monstrous" system, fraught with such injustice as "it is almost impossible to conceive." Has the deprecation of useless war expenditure nothing to do with the moral and material improvement of India? On the contrary, does it not lie at the very roots of all social and material progress? Is it not wise to narrow the gulf between rulers and ruled, "earnestly hoping that every effort would be made to stem the tide of reactionary measures which would add to the existing unrest?" Is it not wise to strike at the real germs of famine "by moderating the land revenue assessment, curtailing the expenditure (especially for military purposes), and developing Native industries?" To our mind, the only statesmen in India, or in any way dealing with Indian affairs, are the leaders of the Congress; and if the *Times* can tell us, in reference to the Transvaal muddle, that "the uneasiness of the public has been lulled by smooth official assurances in and out of Parliament, made, as we were told, on the unimpeachable authority of trusted experts," how much more applicable is the like argument to the affairs of India? Our officials have for several years been applying a system of Thuggee to India on the ground of India's disaffection and disloyalty. Yet, in the day of our need, not only is India found to be loyal to the core, but she is ready and anxious to fight our enemies in the Transvaal; and whereas our British Indian fellow-subjects in Natal have been treated worse than dogs, they have extorted the admiration of war correspondents, and even the recantation of Natal newspapers, by their courageous services as stretcher-bearers in the field. This, we venture to submit, is hardly the time, for "Imperialists" of all people, to pour abuse and contumely on loyal men in whose hands, after all, lie the future destinies of the British Indian Empire.

The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of Mr. John Power Wallis, barrister-at-law, to be Advocate-General at Madras to fill the vacancy caused by the appointment of Mr. Arnold White as Chief Justice of Madras.

Mr. J. P. Wallis, who has been appointed Advocate-General at Madras, is the son of the late John E. Wallis, of the Inner Temple, who was for some years editor and proprietor of the *Tablet*, and afterwards Judge of the Mixed Tribunals in Egypt. He graduated at the London University, taking the gold medal in classics at the M.A. examination in 1882, was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1886, and joined the Northern Circuit.

MAHOMETANS AND THE CONGRESS.

The *Lahore Tribune* of December 19 says;—A general meeting of the Anjuman-i-Mohammadi, the oldest Mahometan Association of Lucknow, was held on Sunday at noon, Nawab Ali Mohammad Khan Bahadur, Life-President of the *Anjuman* presiding. 160 gentlemen, representing all classes of the Mahometan community and the members of the ex-royal family of Oudh, enjoying large *Wasiqas*, were elected delegates. Great enthusiasm prevailed. The recent futile attempt on the part of a few individuals to "dissociate" themselves from the national assembly has caused great amusement at Lucknow. The fourth ward meeting was held the same evening at Fatehgunj, representing the residents of Ganeshgunj and Wazirgunj wards, Nawab Hashmat Hussan Khan Bahadur presiding. Fifty delegates were elected, of whom thirty-five are representative Mahometans and fifteen Hindus.

THE RELEASE OF THE NATUS.

We take the following telegrams from the Calcutta *Englishman* of December 28:—

POONA, December 26.

Sirdar Shrimant Balwantrao Natu and his brother Hari have been released. They left Belgaum to-day, and are expected to arrive at Poona to-morrow. A number of people gathered before their house in the city this afternoon, making a demonstration.

BOMBAY, December 27.

In reference to the release of the Natus, a Belgaum correspondent wires:—The Collector sent for Bala Saheb and Tatya Saheb Natu last evening and read them the order of Government to the effect that they were no longer State prisoners, and that the attachment on all their lands and estates was cancelled. There was a large meeting of Brahmins at the Maruti Temple as soon as the news spread through the city and sugar and sweetmeats were distributed and much enthusiasm prevailed. The two Sirdars and their families who have been accommodated in a large bungalow in the fort, leave for Poona on Friday, the 29th.

The *Indu-Prakash* (December 28) wrote:—In its gravity, the seizure of the Natus was certainly the most serious attack on liberty that was made during the sedition scare. In times "of profound quiet" and widespread misery, was applied to two comparatively insignificant citizens an obsolete Regulation passed to deal effectively with the turbulent Maratha Chiefs of unbroken power and influence who tenaciously refused to own British supremacy, even when their legal chief had made due submission and retired on pension to distant Ganges. What a pity it was that in vindicating the act the Secretary of State had to descend, drawn from the theory of conspiracy, to that of the intimidation of a nurse with a loss of practice! It was when the defence descended morally so low that the entire affair—the putting the mountain under labour for a rat—became supremely ridiculous. The most sober amongst us cannot indeed deny that there may be occasions when the State should have, in the interests of the society at large, full power over the person and property of individuals. Even in free England, there is the practice of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in times of danger. But there such suspension of the ordinary guarantees of freedom is the work of legislative deliberation and not the result of a freak of the Executive. The Natu affair has shown to us the dangers of a standing authority in the executive to deprive, at will, and for an indefinite time, any person of his liberty, like the one Regulation XXV of 1827 vests. If it is to remain on the Statute Book, we trust that the Natu affair shall at least ensure that great circumspection shall be exercised before it is again put into practice.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (December 28) wrote:—So the Natu brothers are free men again! It has not yet come out whether they owe their release to Lord Curzon or to Lord Sandhurst. This much is quite evident that they were released after Lord Sandhurst had met Lord Curzon in Calcutta. It is also significant that they have been released just at the moment when the friends and admirers of Lord Sandhurst are trying to secure him a farewell address. Everybody praises the amiable traits in the character of Lord Sandhurst; and but for his surroundings, it is believed, he would have proved an excellent ruler. Unfortunately for the people of the Bombay Presidency, or, for the matter of that, of the whole of India, the name of Lord Sandhurst is associated with so many retrograde measures that it is not possible for them to do him any honour on the eve of his departure from this country. If Lord Sandhurst had set the Natus free as soon as it was discovered that they were perfectly innocent, his friends and admirers would have no cause for anxiety to secure a permanent memorial for him, with the support of the entire people of his Presidency.

The *Hindu* (December 26) said: Our Bombay correspondent telegraphs to-day that the Natu brothers have been released, and that the attachment on their immovable property has been raised. It is nearly two years and a-half since these prominent citizens of Poona were arrested under the most startling circumstances and were removed from the scene of their birth, associations, and interests. No part of the policy of Lord Sandhurst's Government during the

last three years has been attacked so vehemently, so fiercely, and yet so justly as this idiotic interference with the liberty of the subject under the authority of a barbarous law enacted in a barbarous period. The outrageous procedure could not be defended at the time it was enforced; it has not been defended since; and although repeated opportunities have been given for explanation and justification, they have not been availed of either by the Secretary of State or by the Bombay Government in a frank and straightforward manner. All that we heard from them was some mysterious reference to the peace of a certain part of the Bombay Presidency, and even this only after all the cock-and-bull stories about an English nurse and other imaginary things had completely failed and been discredited. Lord Sandhurst could have, if he chose, set the Natus at liberty at a much earlier period, especially because there was not a scintilla of evidence to connect them with any illegal, wrongful, or disloyal act; and the fact that his Excellency delayed restoring them to liberty till almost the last moment of his administration, deprives his act of all the grace which would have been attached to it if done at an earlier period. Lord Sandhurst knew as well as anybody else that if he did not release the prisoners his successor would do so immediately after his arrival in this country; for few Englishmen could be reconciled to the idea of restraining the liberty of innocent subjects of her Majesty without adequate cause shown, and Sir Stafford Northcote would demand evidence which would satisfy reasonable minds before he confirmed the continuance of the prisoners under surveillance. Hence, from February next, in any case, the Natus could have expected to be set free, even if Lord Sandhurst went away without doing anything for their release, and the future Governor of Bombay would have felt no difficulty in maintaining the peace of the Presidency with the Natus living as freed men in Poona. The deportation of these two people has seriously affected the popularity and prestige of Government, has even impaired public confidence in its sense of justice; and for this great achievement the entire credit is due to Lord Sandhurst. Their arrest and deportation will remain as a dark spot in the history of British administration since the assumption of the government of India by the Crown. Contemporary observers have found nothing to justify the act: and posterity will condemn it. And Lord Sandhurst's name will be ever connected with the revival of a long-forgotten Regulation, intended purely for a barbarous state of society and government, at a period of peaceful and enlightened government.

THE NEW GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY.

PRESENTATIONS AT EXETER.

The new Governor of Bombay, Sir Stafford Northcote, who is henceforth to be known as Lord Northcote of Exeter, was on Tuesday the recipient of a series of farewell honours at Exeter, which city he for twenty years represented in Parliament. At noon there was an influential gathering in the Guildhall, for the presentation of the Freedom of the city. Both political parties, and, indeed, all sections of the citizens, were represented, including the Corporation and the Cathedral dignitaries. Among those present were the Earl and Countess of Iddesleigh, and Ladies Rosalind and Elizabeth Northcote.—The Mayor (Mr. Hamlin) presided, and in a brief speech explained that the business of the occasion was to add the name of Sir Stafford Northcote to their list of Freemen, in accordance with a Resolution recently passed by the City Corporation. The vote of the Council and the opinion of the citizens were absolutely unanimous in support of the honour the Corporation proposed to bestow. (Cheers.) Sir Stafford Northcote was now called upon to rule over a vast province in our Indian Empire. The experience of the citizens of Exeter gave them full confidence in his ability to discharge the duties of that high office with credit and satisfaction. (Cheers.)

The new Freeman then signed the Burgess Roll, and made the usual declaration to the effect that he would as a "Free and enfranchised man of this City" do his best, by counsel and assistance, to promote the order and good government of Exeter. Three cheers were then given for the youngest Freeman, and the diploma of his admission to citizenship was handed to him in a silver gilt casket of Gothic design. It bore an inscription, which set forth that, together with the Honorary Freedom of the City of Exeter and a purse of 300 sovereigns—to be applied to the endowment of a cot in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital—it was presented to Sir Stafford Northcote, on his appointment as Governor of Bombay, in recognition and appreciation of his conspicuous services as Member for Exeter from 1880 to 1899; of the devotion of himself and Lady Northcote to the interests of all classes in the constituency, and especially of those in affliction and distress.

Sir Stafford Northcote, in responding, said it was not easy to command words adequate to express his gratitude for the honour they had done him, and for their generous appreciation of his services during the long time he represented their city in the House of Commons. He had always, in the case of any movement for the good of the city, been able to reckon upon the support of the Corporation and of all the leading citizens, irrespective of Party. (Hear, hear). Their invariable kindness to him had culminated in the presentation of the Freedom of the city, an honour which had been held in successive generations by many of his ancestors. It was an honour which his father highly appreciated, and he had no doubt that his brother, Lord Iddesleigh, equally valued it. He hoped it would not be unwelcome news to them to hear that that morning he had received an intimation from the Prime Minister that not only had her Majesty been pleased to sanction his retaining the name of Northcote in the Peerage—(hear, hear)—but that she had further approved of that name not being disassociated from the city of Exeter. (Cheers.) At the present moment the British Empire was passing through a period of stress and of danger. (Hear, hear.) They were all proud of the manner in which Exonians and Devonmen were bearing their share in the struggle. (Cheers.) He anxiously desired, to the best of his ability, to discharge the new and wider responsibilities with which the Sovereign had entrusted him. If health and strength were preserved to him he hoped to be permitted at the end of his term of office to return to Devonshire. (Hear, hear.) It would then be his study, although he was the latest recruit to their Burgess Roll, not to be the last in doing anything which might be in his power to promote the welfare of Exeter. (Cheers.)

The proceedings then concluded. Later in the afternoon Sir Stafford and Lady Northcote were entertained to luncheon in the large hall of the Rougemont Hotel. The mayor presided, and there was a large attendance. Sir Stafford Northcote replying to the toast of "The Guests," said although he and his wife would be far distant from his fellow-citizens, their hearts must ever remain Exonian (cheers.)

A concert was given in the evening in the Victoria Hall. During the proceedings Lady Northcote was presented with an album containing the signatures of the subscribers to the Farewell Reception Fund, and Sir Stafford Northcote was handed a purse of 300 sovereigns, which he at once gave to the treasurer of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, in order that the amount might be applied to the endowment of a cot bearing the family name of the donor. Lady Northcote expressed the high value she attached to so interesting a souvenir of her many friends in Exeter. The cheque for 300 sovereigns, the amount of the Testimonial Fund, was presented to Sir Stafford Northcote by Mr. E. S. Sanders, a local banker, who has been for sixty years Chairman of the Conservative party in Exeter. Sir Stafford Northcote in responding, said the testimonial could not have taken a form more agreeable to himself, since it enabled him to devote the fund towards the alleviation of suffering, and towards increasing the value of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital—an Institution which did extremely good work, and well deserved their generous support.

INDIA AND THE JAPAN TREATY.

The following communique has (says the *Englishman*) been issued by the Government of India:—The Japanese Government have agreed to the adhesion of India to the Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and Japan which was signed at London on July 16, 1894. The Treaty will apply to the whole of India, including the territories of Native Princes and Chiefs who are under British suzerainty, subject to the following conditions and reservations which have been accepted by the Japanese Government, and are the same as those proposed in all pending Commercial Treaties to which India is a party—(i) That discretionary power be reserved to the Indian Government to prevent any foreigner without their consent from residing or sojourning, coming to or travelling through India, including the territories of Native Princes and Chiefs who are under British suzerainty. (ii) As regards the Native States of India the rights to be enjoyed by Japanese subjects under Articles I and III of the Treaty will be subject only to the same limitations as those which are now or may hereafter be in force with respect to European British subjects. (iii) The right of appointing Consuls will be confined to the seaport towns of the provinces under the direct administration of the Government of India. India's adherence to the Treaty will be provided for by a protocol to be signed by Her Britannic Majesty's Minister in Japan. Meanwhile this country is actually enjoying the advantages which will be formally assured to her by the treaty, as Indians are said to be under no special restrictions in Japan.

The *Times of India* (December 30) says:—The official communique, indicating that the Japanese Government have agreed to the adhesion of India to the commercial treaty with England signed in 1894, closes an episode which is the reverse of creditable to the Indian Foreign Department. Eighteen months have elapsed since public attention was drawn to the fact that either through an unaccountable misconception of the position of the subjects of non-adhering States under the new treaty, or a still graver neglect of Indian interests, the Government were taking no steps to secure to the Bombay merchants who have built up a great trade with Japan the advantages thereby guaranteed. During this period an obstinate silence has been maintained upon the trend of the negotiations, and with the exception of a bald statement by Mr. St. John Brodrick in the House of Commons, no information has been forthcoming except from Japanese sources. The Foreign Department evidently feel that they have been guilty of unwarrantable delay, if not actual neglect, for attached to the official communique is a carefully worded apologia pointing out that India is now actually enjoying the advantages which will be formally assured to her by treaty. It is true that Indians have been under no special restrictions in Japan, but for this small thanks are due to their own administration. Since the new treaty came into force, now some six months ago, British Indians resident in Japan have enjoyed, through the sufferance of the Mikado only, those rights and privileges long before guaranteed to the subjects of more vigilant Governments. It is unpleasant to remember that an enlightened and enterprising community like the British Indian residents of Japan have, from easily preventible causes, been placed in a situation of dependence upon the pleasure of a foreign Government. The only glimpse of the obstacles which hindered the completion of these belated negotiations we have been vouchsafed comes from a Japanese vernacular paper, which hinted that the Indian Government were striving to obtain certain special concessions necessitated by the peculiar political composition of the Empire, and which have been inserted in all treaties entered into with Continental countries. In

this they have apparently been substantially successful, as the reservations accepted by the Japanese Government are the same as those proposed in all pending commercial treaties to which India is a party. Probably the point was worth disputing; but if so it only emphasizes the neglect in delaying, until the end of last year, the commencement of negotiations.

"MEMBER FOR INDIA."

[From the "New Age."]

Loosely as the term "Member for India" has been applied, it cannot but be regarded as a distinguished designation: it may be taken as implying that the bearer exhibits exceptional industry and persistence in dealing with Indian affairs in the House of Commons. It ought also to imply that the member deals with such affairs in a large Imperial spirit. It has been applied to John Bright, to Henry Fawcett, and to Charles Bradlaugh, every one of whom gave expression to comprehensive and just views of the relations between Great Britain and the Eastern Dependency. In the *Morning Herald* of January 12, Mr. T. A. Cudlipp did ample justice to the claims of Bright and Fawcett, and less than justice to Bradlaugh, and he proclaimed the need for a successor. The heading of his article was: "Wanted: a Member for India." The form of advertisement, we confess, is, to us at least, not a little startling. It had not occurred to us, indeed, that there was any vacancy. One soon recovers from such shocks when one recollects how dense is the prevailing ignorance of Indian matters, even among professed journalists. Mr. Cudlipp indicates that he is a journalist of considerable standing, so far as years go; for he relates a journalistic incident in which he played a part in connexion with a speech of Fawcett's on some Indian question. Yet, strangely enough, he forgets to mention that for several years since then Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji occupied a seat in the House of Commons, and would seem to have no small claim to be enumerated among Members for India. It may be that, in Mr. Cudlipp's view, the title is reserved for British gentlemen. But, in that case, one might have expected him to mention Sir William Wedderburn, who spent a generation in India as an official, first in the ranks of the Civil Service, and then as a Judge of the High Court of Bombay, and has dealt with Indian affairs in the light of that personal experience with an assiduity, knowledge, and single-mindedness rarely paralleled in public life. There may be some occult reason for the omission of all reference to these two laborious workers for India in Parliament. It can hardly be an oversight on the part of an experienced journalist. In the light of the *Morning Herald's* previous treatment of Indian affairs, it is an ommission that invites explanation.

The case is darkened materially by the tentative suggestion—if indeed it comes to so much as a suggestion—of the possibilities of Mr. W. S. Caine in the rôle of new member for India. Mr. Caine has certainly shown eager interest in India, and he may secure a seat at the next General election. But he had already had his opportunity in the House, and, if we may augur the future from Mr. Cudlipp's silence as to his performance, we cannot be very hopeful of his success. All the same, we shall be glad to see him taking up the case of India in the House once he gets back there, and winning for himself the honourable designation of "Member for India," if it is in him to do so. Mr. Cudlipp thinks "he might be dangerous to the unsympathetic rule of an arrogant home Government." Is he quite sure that Mr. Caine's plan of campaign involves operations of this unpopular character? We shall see. Mr. Cudlipp gives up Sir Henry Fowler as hopeless, or seems to do so. Still he commits himself to the extraordinary triple statement that "his administration of the India Office was marked by a splendid prescience, a wise appreciation of the significance of the North-West Frontier difficulty, and a generous sympathy with the more mildly Democratic of the Indian reformers." Has Mr. Cudlipp suddenly lapsed into satire? Is he not aware of Sir Henry's concern in the Waziristan expedition? One would really like to know where are to be found those remarkable Indian reformers that appreciated Sir Henry's "generous sympathy," and the not readily discernible instance of his "splendid prescience." It is not without reason, we apprehend, that Mr. Caine and Sir Henry Fowler are brought together so markedly. Time will reveal. But we predict that certain elements in the situation which Mr. Cudlipp has not considered worthy of prominence, will make their influence felt in ways, and to results, that he has excluded from the scope of his speculations. Mr. Caine, however, has probably rather more of the genius of electioneering than to tie his fortunes as "Member for India" to the tail of Sir Henry's chariot.

"The sooner this position is filled," says Mr. Cudlipp, "the better for India and the better for Britain." Certainly, if there be a vacancy, which we deny point blank. "We want a man to give articulate expression to the ambitions that must possess a people whose gleams of hope and shadows of discontent are unheeded where alone they can have them realised." This, surely, is precisely the work that Sir William Wedderburn has been doing with chivalrous devotion and conspicuous ability during the past seven years. If anyone else would come forward and do it more effectively, we do not doubt for a moment that Sir William would be the happiest man alive in consequence of such a supercession. But till the "wanted" gentleman appear, let Sir William's noble services not be so cavalierly ignored. The example does not seem to be mightily encouraging to possible candidates. However, there is another side to the matter, and that is the public side. Some wise and eminent statesmen, we believe, once affirmed that "we are all members for India." If so, then what is everybody's business does seem to be hardly anybody's business. But what a suggestion of incompetence on the part of the Indian authorities in the House, on the whole of the two front benches, and indeed upon all the benches together, is contained in this cry for a "Member for India"! And what a slur it casts upon the British constituencies in that they do not stir up the interest of their representatives in the good government and administration of the great dependency! One point more: the man that is "to give articulate expression to the ambitions" of the Indians must, we take it, be in close touch with the leaders of Indian opinion. Sir William Wedderburn notoriously is so. But is Sir Henry Fowler? Or is Mr. Caine? Sir William is known, trusted, and revered from end to end of India. Is Sir Henry? Is Mr. Caine? We pause for a reply.

THE RECRUITMENT OF COOLIES.

[From the "Bengalee."]

The Assam Emigration Bill is now before the Government, and it is a measure which, inasmuch as it aims to some extent at any rate to put down the evils of recruitment, deserves the unstinted support of public opinion. We regret deeply the agitation which is now being carried on against it by a section of the Anglo-Indian Press. The present system of recruitment is attended with grave abuse. It gives unlimited scope to the tricks of the *arkati* who has reduced his tactics to a fine art. Wives are separated from their husbands, sons and daughters from their mothers. The amount of suffering which the system entails and the demoralisation by which it is accompanied are dreadful to contemplate. The story is a long and oft-repeated one, and from day to day it receives new illustration from the ever-increasing record of fresh cases. That Englishmen should have the heart to support such a system affords the most striking evidence of the demoralisation which residence in this country is apt to breed among those from whom better things might be expected. We desire to add one more illustration to the accumulating record. A Kayestha in a respectable way in life and occupying a respectable position was told that he would be provided with an appointment in Assam worth thirty rupees a month, and on this promise he went through the regular forms and told the customary lies, and was duly installed as a coolie in a tea-garden in Assam. When too late he discovered his mistake, and now his mother has addressed a communication to the Chief Commissioner of Assam praying him to interfere and order the immediate release of her son.

Here is the translation of a letter written by Lal Behary Sircar working as a coolie in the garden:—

1306, B. E., 11th Aswin.

Brother, accept my hundreds of thousands of greetings. Leaving home I have reached Assam. At Calcutta, a Babu asked me whether I wished to secure an employment. On my asking what sort of employment he could give me and where I was to go, he told me that I would have to serve as a clerk in Singli Garden, District Tezpore, on a salary of Rs. 30. After this he took me into a pucca house on the Harrison Road and asked me my name and caste. I told him my name is Lal Behary Sircar and I am a Kyasth by caste. He told me to give my name as Hari Charan and the caste as *Chasa* (cut ator) because, he said, that in so doing I would get employment very soon. I told him what is the use of giving a false name and caste? He said you will have to do this, it is no use giving one's real name and caste in a foreign country; moreover, do not tell that you live at Calcutta, but give out that your home is at Nudiaghur, Purulia. Then he took me to a house at Naihaty; thence to Goalundo in the evening train and thence by steamer to Dhubri at once. There he made me sign an agreement for four years and told me that it was customary to sign an agreement for four years and he himself had to do so, and there was no harm in it as I would be able to come home whenever I liked. Thus making the agreement I reached Beharigat at once, and there I could not find the Babu any more; after alighting from the steamer two Chapraisies told me that I would have to go to Singli Garden to dig earth there; on hearing this, I entreated them with tears to take me back to Calcutta, because, I told them, that I would not be able to dig earth; they told me "go now and dig earth for four or five years and when the agreement expires you may go home." On reaching the garden I saw that it was full of hillocks, jungle, and tea plants. I am getting fever every day; men are dying of swelling of the body. My body has also swollen; and I have no more hopes of life.

Tell mother, and ask her to try to get my release from this place; and ask sister to help me a little. The European gentleman (here) has told me that I can get my release if I can pay Rs. 100 in cash.

A few paces from the Harrison Road and Sealdah crossing lives one Woomanath Lahari, who deals in coolie business. He sent me to Assam. Going there ask him his name and tell him to bring back Hari Charan whom he had sent to Assam. If he refuses, take this letter to the police and file a complaint; then only I will get my release, otherwise I will have no hopes of living any longer. Give my pronams to all and reply sharp.

Here men have to dig earth though they are ill. They beat us if we cannot dig. I too have to dig earth daily though I am ill.

My address,—District Tezpore, Post Office Kelom, Singlijan Tea Garden.

To the address of Hari Charan Sircar.

We desire to call the attention of the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the above petition. The mother's wail will appeal to his deepest sympathies, and we are convinced that the young man who was the victim of fraud will be released from his temporary bondage.

NOW READY.

CONGRESS GREEN BOOK.—No. III.

The Proposed Separation
OF
Judicial and Executive Duties in India.

MEMORIAL
FROM

RT. HON. LORD HOBHOUSE, K.C.S.I.
(late Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

RT. HON. SIR RICHARD GARTH, Q.C.
(late Chief Justice of Bengal).

RT. HON. SIR RICHARD COUCH
(late Chief Justice of Bengal, Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council).

SIR CHARLES SARGENT
(late Chief Justice of Bombay.)

SIR WILLIAM MARKBY, K.C.I.E.
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta).

SIR JOHN BUDD PHEAR
(late Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, and Chief Justice of Ceylon).

SIR JOHN SCOTT, K.C.M.G.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

SIR W. WEDDERBURN, BART., M.P.
(late Judge of the High Court, Bombay).

SIR ROLAND K. WILSON, BART.
(late Reader in Indian Law at the University of Cambridge).

MR. HERBERT J. REYNOLDS, C.S.I.
(late Member of the Bengal Legislative Council).

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